

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

MAY 12 1935

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

NEWS FLASHES

October 20 - 31, 1935

BENTON-CURRY-WOOD: In compliment to Thomas Hart Benton, who has just assumed his duties as head of the Department of Painting at the Kansas City Art Institute, the Loan Exhibition for the month of October is devoted to an extensive group of paintings, water-colours and drawings by the great triumvirate of Midwestern Artists, Mr. Benton, John Steuart Curry, and Grant Wood. It is the first time that Kansas City has seen a comprehensive group of the work of these men, and the exhibition should be a prime attraction to all our visitors.

The most arresting painting by Benton is The Jealous Lover of Lone Green Valley, in which the artist has graphically portrayed this well-known song. It is a typical, well-patterned design with the freshness of colour and the vigour of attack that we associate with Benton. It will be easily recognizable that Glenn Rounds, a local artist, posed for the singer and the harmonica player in the group of musicians. Homestead and Morning and a Sack of Meal are trenchant comments on life in the South.

The group of Benton drawings was recently shown in New York and drew praise from all the critics. Elizabeth Luther Cary in the New York Times found them "quiet little drawings without a suggestion of obtrusiveness---that celebrate the American scene---and make an ordinary American feel at home and at ease." Some are serious, some are humorous, some - like Old Man West - are straightforward traditional drawings, but they are all consistent and impel ones attention and thought.

Curry, an artist who has perhaps not yet entirely found himself in the medium of paint, is represented by five oils. Osage Oranges is a beautiful pattern of the familiar local hedge, the radiating lines of the branches strongly silhouetted against the morning sky, and the contrast of the round forms of the fruit and the linear quality of the leaves beautifully achieved. Elephants catches the unwieldy bulk of the circus standby and successfully suggests their muscular strength. Hen and Hawk is a happier achievement with fine colour and full of action.

Far more successful are this artist's drawings and watercolours. He is entirely at home when he draws farm or wild animals, and his Jersey Bull, Hogs Fighting, and the Stallion and Jack show not only competent draftsmanship, but a deep knowledge of the sinews and the bone structure of his subjects. His two portrait heads are traditional and fundamental in their approach, and the series of sketches of circus life show a sense of humour and a deftness of swift delineation.

It is a triumph to show a group of oils by Wood, the third member of the exhibition. Chief interest will center in his American Gothic, lent by the Chicago Art Institute. It is a much discussed, much reproduced portrait of two Iowans, presented without guile, without flattery. More obvious, it loses when compared to the subtle Woman with Plants, a fine and dignified portrait of the artist's mother. Here Wood is entirely traditional, and gives us a portrait that might have been painted in Florence in the 15th century. The beautiful colour harmony leaves nothing to be desired. Arnold Comes of Age again is a fine, straightforward portrait, slightly unfortunate in the choice of colours for the background which are too feminine for the masculinity of the youth. Young Corn is a typical landscape, beautiful in colour and composed of the rounded, full forms which pattern most of Wood's studies of nature.

The three artists represented form the most discussed group of American painters. They are presenting a scene familiar to every middle-westerner and no one should fail to take advantage of this opportunity to study the canvases which have launched an entirely native movement in American Art.



The group is augmented by loans from the collections of Mr. Thomas Baker, Mrs. David M. Lighton, and Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Schneider.

AMERICAN GRAPHIC ART: The South Loan Gallery and the Blue Print Room have been hung with a group of prints by American artists, circulated by The Society of American Etchers.

A number of familiar names will be recognized among the artists represented. John Taylor Arms, Peggy Bacon, Gifford Beal, Frank W. Benson, Harrison Cady, John E. Costigan, Arther W. Hointzleman, Eugene Higgins, Luigi Lucioni, Thomas W. Nason, Levon West and Mahonri Young are among those who have submitted fine examples of their latest plates.

WEDNESDAY EVENING OPENINGS: The Trustees announce a new policy of Wednesday Evening openings. In pursuance of the policy of a desire to make the Gallery collections and facilities available for a greater public, during the season 1935-36 there will be no admission charge on Wednesday evenings for the Gallery or for the lectures. The first opening under this new policy will take place on October 16th, when the lecture will be given by the Director and will be devoted to the superlative Exhibition of Italian Art which was held this summer in the Petit Palais in Paris. It was a phenomenal success, and over 600,000 visitors viewed the most extensive showing of Italian Art that has ever been gathered together.

On Wednesday Evening, October 23rd there will be given the first lecture of a series designed for an intensive study of Oriental Art, using our own fine collection as a background. This course will be given on alternate Wednesdays by Mr. Laurence Sickman, Curator of Oriental Art.

The third Wednesday evening lecture will be given by the Director, on October 30th, and will be devoted to the Exhibition of Old Masters and Impressionism held this summer in Brussels.

MASTERPIECES: A recently acquired Sung Landscape Autumn is featured as a masterpiece for the week of October 13th. It is one of a series of four seasons and the Gallery is fortunate to own also the Summer which is now hanging in Gallery XXIV. Both these paintings are supreme examples of Chinese landscapes of the period, which sought not to represent a special scene from nature, but to capture the very spirit of ancient trees, cool water, rugged rocks.

The masterpiece for the week of October 20th is a group of antique Chinese Silver that was probably preserved for centuries as the treasure of an old Lama Temple. It dates from the T'ang and the Sung Dynasties and is one of the rarest types of objects in the field of Chinese art, as many of the old examples were melted down for the value of the bullion. Only in the British Museum can comparable examples be found.

An eighteenth dynasty Egyptian Relief depicting figures in a boat will be the masterpiece of the week of October 27th. Slightly carved and raised from the background, the figures are painted in the typical red and by the repetition of forms, give a marked feeling of forward movement.

CHILDREN'S CLASSES: The series of demonstration-gallery lectures for sixth grade public school children started on their second year on October 8th. Sculpture and the architecture of the building is being considered for the first eight weeks and again the staff is being assisted by the Arts and Interests Group of the Junior League.

The Saturday classes for children began on October 5th with a full enrollment of 400. The children are studying the gallery collection by means of sketching, clay modeling, weaving, marionettes, and other crafts. At ten o'clock each Saturday morning the groups assemble for a story about the Masterpiece of the Week and then go with their various instructors to pursue the activities of their choice.



Oct. 15-31, 1935

SUNDAY AFTERNOON MUSICAL: The Gallery is happy to announce that again the Tau Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota will present a series of musical afternoons on the third Sunday of every month. The first concert will be given in the Atkins Auditorium at 3:30 P.M. on Sunday, October 20th. As far as possible the programs are built about the loan exhibitions. Last season the attendance increased with each concert, and many have found it most enjoyable to attend these forty-five minute programs in connection with their Sunday afternoon visit to the Gallery.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD: Philip C. Beam of the Gallery Staff has been awarded a scholarship for graduate study at Fogg Museum, Harvard University. It is a most profitable opportunity for him to continue his art study, but he will be missed at the Gallery.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS AND CONVENTIONS: Mr. Robert Woods Bliss, former Ambassador to the Argentine and to Sweden, and Mrs. Bliss spent Wednesday, October 9th at the Gallery. They are extensive collectors of Oriental Art and in this their first visit, expressed great surprise and delight in our outstanding collection in this field. Their most flattering comments were a source of great satisfaction.

The Kansas City Southwest Clinical Society and their guests spent Wednesday Evening, October 9th, at the Gallery. Over 500 visitors enjoyed the beauties of the Gallery and heard a program given by Doctor M. W. Pickard and Miss O'Donnell and Mr. Gardner of the staff.

The National Convention of Stationers were visitors at the Gallery on October 9th and attended a lecture on the Period Rooms by Miss Jackson.

On October 24th, The Rural Women's Extension Clubs, one of the groups attending the American Royal, will visit the Gallery as guests of the Women's Chamber of Commerce.

GIFTS: The Gallery Library has been presented a 15 volume work of Hokusai's Note Book and a Japanese Sketch Book of Print Artists by Doctor M. W. Pickard. They are welcome additions to our growing store of books.

RADIO BROADCASTS: We are pleased to announce that Station W9XBY has again very graciously given the Gallery a few minutes time on "Janet's Club Calendar" Program. This program is at four o'clock on Saturday afternoon and is an excellent opportunity to keep in touch with what is new at the Gallery.